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ABSTRACT

The findings from a recent study of the occupational and educational status projections of Mexican American, Negro, and Anglo youth are reviewed. The findings were that (1) the status projections of these youth are significantly similar although certain slight differences are noted, and (2) goals established by these youth are predominantly high level goals. These findings serve as bases for investigation concerning the differentials in opportunities and in social support in facilitating these youth in achieving their goals, special emphasis being given the Mexican American relative to Negro and Anglo youth. Tentative conclusions at this point are that Mexican American youth relative to Negroes and Anglos are more severely handicapped in pursuing their goals due to such features as a comparatively lower level of political activism, fewer supporting formal organizations, lack of knowledge and access to knowledge about educational systems and opportunities, language difficulties, and having certain subcultural values which can complicate achievement in the mainstream, Anglo-oriented United States society. Utilizing a theoretical scheme developed by Merton, a speculative inquiry is made into the probable consequences (e.g., heightened political and other social activism, possible "rebellious" activities, counter-cultural movements, and possible coalescence with other ethnic minority organizations) of Mexican American youth experiencing goal blockage. Speculative implications for the Mexican American individual and ethnic group and the larger society are drawn. (Author/NQ)

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AMBITIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOCIAL MOBILITY AND THEIR CONSEQUENCES FOR MEXICAN AMERICANS AS COMPARED WITH OTHER YOUTH*

David E. Wright, Esteban Salinas, and William P. Kuvlesky

ABSTRACT

The findings from a recent study of the occupational and educational status projections of Mexican American, Negro, and Anglo youth are reviewed in order to more widely inform fellow social scientists of this research effort and to serve as a foundation for an interdisciplinary, free-wheeling inquiry into the consequences and policy implications of these findings. This recent research found, first, that the status projections of these youth are significantly similar although certain slight differences are noted, and, second, that the goals established by these youth are predominantly high level goals. These findings serve as bases for investigation concerning the differentials in opportunities and in social support for facilitating these youth in achieving their goals, special emphasis being given the Mexican American relative to Negro and Anglo youth; tentative conclusions at this point are that Mexican American youth relative to Negroes and Anglos are more severely handicapped in pursuing their goals due to such features as a comparatively lower level of political activism, fewer supporting formal organizations and lack of knowledge and access to knowledge about educational systems and opportunities. Additional unique handicaps faced by Mexican American youth include language difficulties and certain subcultural values which can complicate achievement in the mainstream, Anglo oriented United States society. Utilizing a theoretical scheme developed by Merton, a speculative inquiry is made into the probable consequences of Mexican American youth experiencing goal blockage; such consequences include heightened political and other social activism, possible "rebellious" activities, counter cultural movements, and possible coalescence with other ethnic minority organizations. Speculative implications for the Mexican American individual and ethnic group and the larger society are drawn.

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INTRODUCTION

Mexican American youth in the Southwestern United States are stated currently to be orienting themselves toward their future quite differently from their Anglo counterparts (Heller, 1966; Parsons, 1951; Madsen, 1965; Anderson and Johnson, 1968); in short, Mexican American and Anglo youth are said to have differing future goals. One major cause of these differences in future orientations is said to be the fact that these youths are being socialized in two different types of cultures; a great deal of expert social science literature supports this view. The Anglo youth is portrayed as being relatively more future and success-oriented, the Mexican American youth as more present and humanistically oriented. Stating these differences somewhat more extremely, the Anglo youth is said to be achievement oriented, the Mexican American youth is said to value other things more highly--material goods, family ties, having a good time, honor, masculinity (as envisioned by the concept of "machismo"), and living for the present. To the Mexican American adolescent inactivity and leisure are dignified and worthwhile goals. Thus, if he appears somewhat passive or adaptive rather than active in his behavior as compared to his Anglo cohort, such behavior only indicates a fundamental difference in the world views of the Anglo and Mexican American cultures.

Our recent work on how ethnic minorities orient themselves toward their future directly challenges this stereotypical image.

How do youth orient themselves toward their futures? What aspirations, expectations do they hold? There has been considerable hypothesizing and speculation about the status projections of youth, particularly as they are said to vary among youth of different ethnic groups and among youth from varying class positions in the stratification system. At some risk of over-

simplification, these hypotheses and speculations can be summarized as stating that youth from ethnic minorities and youth from lower socio-economic class origins have lower levels of aspirations and expectations than do youth from main-stream, middle and upper class Anglo origins (Hyman, 1966; Rodman, 1963; Rosen, 1959; Parsons, 1951; Simmons, 1961; Stephenson, 1957; Yinger, 1960). Such speculation has gone even further in regards to Mexican Americans, imputing that many supposed features of Mexican culture have influenced these youths' aspirations by fostering low level goals and apathy toward opportunities for social mobility (Burma, 1970a, 1970b; Heller, 1966; Parsons, 1951; Simmons, 1961; Ulibarri, 1966).

CONCEPTS AND METHODS

Our studies on the orientations of youth have been facilitated by using a conceptual framework which distinguishes between what a person desires-(aspiration)-with regard to a specific object and what that person anticipates-(expectation)-will actually occur with respect to that same object. Aspiration is synonymous with "goal." If that person desires one thing, but anticipates that something different will actually occur, that person is said to be experiencing anticipatory deflection--i.e., the difference between aspiration and expectation. Aspirations (desires) can vary in strength--that is, some persons may be more strongly committed in their aspirations, to their goals than others; this variable quality of aspirations is labeled intensity of aspiration. There is also a variable quality associated with expectation, specifically, persons vary in how certain they are of obtaining their expectations--certainty of expectation. This simple conceptual scheme--aspiration, expectation, deflection, intensity, and certainty--can be applied to any status area, for example, education, occupation, income, residence, military plans, and family and marital plans (Kuvlesky and Bealer, 1966; Kuvlesky and Ohlendorf, 1968). The majority of the status projections research at Texas A&M has been performed in relation to education and occupation, and to a lesser extent in relation to family and marital plans.

To investigate these propositions concerning the orientations of youth, data were obtained from high school sophomores attending school in two widely separated study areas that were purposively selected to be homogeneous on three criteria: (1) a proportionately high rate of ethnic minority members-either Negro or Mexican American; (2) a proportionately high rate of poverty; and (3) predominatly rural populations located in nonmetropolitan areas. Data on these counties are presented in Table 1. During the spring of 1966, Negro and Anglo

youth enrolled in 23 public high schools located in three East Texas counties were interviewed; during the spring of 1967, Mexican American youth enrolled in seven public high schools located in four Texas counties either bordering on or in close proximity to the Mexican border were interviewed. These youth were interviewed in their respective schools, in group settings, utilizing a standard questionnaire which elicited information on various status projections and personal background data. Usable data were available for analysis on 596 Mexican American, 197 Negro, and 287 Anglo boys and girls (Kuvlesky, et al., 1971). Information was also collected from personal interviews with 74 Mexican American school dropouts--age peers of the Mexican American sophomores mentioned above from the same area (Wages, et al., 1969). Information obtained from the respondents clearly indicates that all three ethnic groupings were generally from deprived circumstances.[1] However, some marked ethnic differences were noted as follows: the Negro youth are the most disadvantaged; in terms of normal SES indicators, the Anglo youth are considerably better off than either ethnic minority; and, in an important sense, the Mexican American youth differ from both other groups in that they use Spanish (Wright, 1968).

FINDINGS

The material presented in this section is a brief summarization of a research article published earlier in the Journal of Vocational Behavior (Kuvlesky, et al., 1971). The results of all possible ethnic comparisons are summarized in Table 2; in almost all cases, it was judged that the similarity of the ethnic groups was more significant than the variations existing among them. The three ethnic groups were practically similar in reference to aspiration levels, anticipatory deflection, certainty of expectation, and intensity of educational aspiration. On the other hand, substantial ethnic differences occurred in reference to levels of expectations and for intensity of desire for

occupational goals. These differences were due largely to Negroes maintaining higher expectations for both occupation and education, and Mexican Americans having a stronger intensity of desire for job goals. It should be noted further that although males and females of each ethnic group were generally similar, the females accounted for most of the significant variations that occurred.

Findings by Conceptual Item

Aspirations. The occupational and educational aspirations of all three ethnic groups were generally high--professional and managerial jobs and college degrees (Table 3). Small proportions of any of the ethnic sex groupings held low-level job or educational goals. However, about a fourth of Negro males had low occupational goals and a fifth of Mexican Americans males had low educational goals.

Expectations. As with aspirations, the level of expectations were similar among all three ethnic groups and tended to be rather high (Table 4). However, comparison of expectations and aspirations clearly indicates that the respondents maintained high expectations less often than they did high aspirations. A noteworthy difference here is that Negroes had higher expectations than did the other ethnic groups, especially in relation to education.

Anticipatory goal deflection. Anticipatory goal deflection is determined by comparing an individual's goal with what he expects. Our findings indicate that most youth, regardless of ethnicity, did not experience anticipatory goal deflection from their occupational and educational goals; but when it did occur, it was predominantly negative (Table 5). In sum, the ethnic groups were quite similar in that most did not experience anticipatory deflection. However, despite the findings that the similarities were more important than

the differences, the following patterns of ethnic differences were noticeable. Anglos experienced less anticipatory deflection than Negroes and Mexican Americans; and Mexican American youth generally demonstrated more negative deflection than the others.

Intensity of aspirations. The three ethnic groupings differed very little in reference to the strength of desire for their educational goals; a very large majority of all groups had strong attachments to their desired education (Table 6). Additionally, a very large majority of each ethnic group had strong desires for their occupational goals, with the exception of Negro males of whom only a third indicated strong desires. Another similarity among the three ethnic groups is that more of the respondents maintained a stronger attachment to educational goals than to occupational goals. As a final note on intensity of aspirations, despite the generally high commitments to goals displayed by all ethnic groups, it was found that markedly more Mexican American youth indicated a strong desire for their occupational goals and somewhat more indicated a strong desire for their educational goals than did the other two ethnic groupings.

Certainty of expectations. The Negro and Anglo youth were very similar in proportions feeling certain about their expectations: about half of both groups held high levels of certainty for their occupational expectations, and about two-thirds of each group maintained high levels of certainty for their educational expectations (Table 6). In every case, Mexican American youth were less certain about attaining their occupational and educational expectations: only a third felt certain of attaining their occupational expectations; only a half felt similarly

about their educational expectations. For all three groups, there was a greater degree of certainty toward educational expectations than there was toward occupational expectations.

Summary of findings. In sum, the findings are that the ethnic groups showed a great deal of similarity; indeed, the similarities outweighed the differences. The specific findings were that the youth in general held high level expectations, tended not to anticipate deflection from their goals, were strongly committed to their educational and occupational goals, and were rather certain of attaining their expectations. While these similarities were judged to be of primary importance, the following differences should be noted. First, fewer Mexican Americans and Anglos held high level expectations than did Negro youth. Second, more Mexican American youth expressed strong commitments to both educational and occupational goals than did other youth. And, third, more Mexican American youth were uncertain about attaining their expectations than were Negros or Anglo youth.

IMPLICATIONS

The preceding is a synopsis of the major findings from the comparative research we have performed on the occupational and educational projections of youth. When invited to participate in this workshop, we perceived a desire on the part of our host for us to go beyond the findings and to speculate as we wished about the implications of the research--indeed, the emphasis on speculations and implications was greater than that on findings. Thus, beyond this point, we frankly "go out on a limb" to speculate about what will occur, although we attempt to correlate our speculation with available research findings. Mexican American youth are

given prime attention from this point forward because, although many of the comments made are generally applicable to all youth and although the sponsor for the workshop is concerned with more than a single ethnic minority, in the Southwest the Mexican American is the most noticeable minority.

In preface to our "speculations," it should be noted that we are generalizing about Mexican American youth at large rather than merely about those in Texas. Until similar study can be extended to youth in other areas, the findings of this study serve as tentative generalizations relevant to the majority of Mexican American youth. It bears noting that the nation's Mexican American population is largely concentrated in the five southwestern states of Arizona, California, Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas, and that approximately two-fifths of these people reside in Texas; hence, the findings <u>are</u> representative of a large portion of these youth. And, we believe that at least in relation to status projections and conditions of economic deprivation, the youth we sampled are representative of Mexican American youth in other areas.

Stereotypes

Many of the implications of these findings are obvious, but a few in particular deserve comment. Findings that Mexican Americans have high social achievement goals not only contradict some widely shared assertions about lower class youth; these findings are a direct, critical attack on the aged stereotypes of Mexican Americans as being a non-motivated, backward lackadaisical people who give their commitment to presumed subcultural goals outside the predominant themes of this society (dozing in the

sun, attending carnivals, praying in churches a great deal, etc.)! What about all the expert literature which has supported such conclusions (Parsons, 1951; Heller, 1966; Madsen, 1965; Anderson and Johnson, 1968)? How are the incongruities between our findings and these other often dated observations explained? The following are set forth as possible explanations.

First, it is conceivable that studies portraying Mexican Americans as having significant subcultural variation with respect to these goals, that is, lower level goals, are simply mistaken.[2] Second, our studies are fairly recent while much of the standard literature on Mexican Americans is comparatively dated; perhaps both sets of data are accurate and there have been recent, dramatic changes in the outlooks of Mexican Americans--as some have put it, a giant awakening has taken place. Third, it could be that we social scientists are so normally inclined to discern and describe differences that we have neglected to search for similarities among groups of people. Thus, it is possible that while certain subcultural differences between Mexican Americans and other groups do exist, certain similarities also co-exist among these people. A combination of these latter two explanations is probably the closest to a full account.

Opportunities

Our findings indicate that Mexican Americans have high educational goals; and, although we do not have the necessary evidence to thoroughly substantiate how these youths' parents feel about this, there is reason to believe that the parents do positively endorse the high goals of their children. Our own experiences in conversations with parents during the personal interviews with Mexican American high school dropouts supports

this. "I want my children to get an education--for many reasons, one, that they will not have to work as hard as I have" is a statement heard from many Mexican American parents. However, the extent to which these youth, in general, can receive support from their parents is highly questionable on at least two grounds. First, in respect to financial supports, it is well documented that a great many Mexican American families are in extreme poverty conditions (Browning and McLemore, 1964; Mittlebach and Marshall, 1966; Upham and Wright, 1966); for youth from such families, a college education--indeed, a high school education is a great "ambition" luxury. Second, as so few Mexican American adults have had high school and/or college education experience, they are not familiar with the new life their children will face if they move ahead of them and are therefore at a disadvantage in helping to prepare their children and may even fear estrangement as a result. The parents are in all probability strongly convinced that their children should continue their education, but the positive incentives the parents can offer are few and their anxieties and fears probably great.

An area quite worthy of attention, perhaps especially in light of this research effort, is the vocational educational system. Mexican American youth have high educational and occupational goals and yet a disproportionate number of these youth are in vocational educational programs relative to Blacks and Anglos (Center for Vocational and Technical Education, 1971; Mayeske, 1967). Additionally, while there is evidence to indicate that lower class youth in general tend to be channeled toward vocational education and not encouraged to go on to college, this "channeling" appears to hit Mexican Americans particularly

hard (Mayeske, 1967)--Why? Are not the goals of our educational system supposedly directed toward "enabling the student to attain his individual goals?" How is vocational education perceived to aid this minority? The tendency to push vocational education as a general pallative for the disadvantaged--irrespective of individual differences in abilities and motivation--would not seem to serve the individual needs or societal needs well.

Even when Mexican American youth decide to pursue a college degree, they tend to select a school near home; thus, these youth still continue to be isolated from the larger society. Consider for example that most of the major state-supported universities in Texas have an average of two percent or less of Mexican American youth in their student body composition; exceptions to this are Texas A&I University, Pan American University, and the University of Texas at El Paso--all of which are located in areas of Texas where the sparse population is predominantly Mexican American.

A similar isolation of Mexican Americans occurs in reference to occupations. With the vast majority of their parents employed in lower level occupations--e.g., agricultural laborers, common laborers, waiters, janitors, etc.--and with the availability of meaningful summer jobs for Mexican American students rather limited, these youth have little opportunity to learn about the availability of alternative jobs, let alone what is required to attain their goals. Such a situation is scarcely conducive to facilitating mobility.

In short, Mexican Americans have been largely isolated by class, residence, and language from the educational and occupational realms they

wish and expect to enter. This isolation results in a lack of information which would aid them to make plans to secure their goals. Coupled with this lack of information is a wariness about and lack of understanding of the "red tape" which is involved in working within the system to obtain facilitation from it (it should be noted that this is characteristic not only of Mexican Americans, but of the lower classes in general).

Goals-Means-Adaptive Behavior

Summarizing to this point, most disadvantaged youth have not only high goals but high expectations. Further, these youth and especially the Mexican American youth are strongly committed to their goals. However, considering the existing resources upon which these youth can draw and the current social structuring of access to opportunity, it can be concluded safely that many of these youth are not going to achieve their goals; in the current state of affairs, many have no chance at all. For reasons outlined above, these statements are especially true of Mexican American youth. The directions for needed changes are clear; substantial change in structures influencing opportunity are needed now.

But what if these changes do not occur, or don't come fast enough--what then? We shift to a consideration of how individuals and groups adapt to situations of goal blockage, utilizing a sociological scheme which revolves about societal goals and the means to those goals, and which presents a typology of adaptive behavior (Merton, 1957).

Two aspects of culture are of concern here. The first is the prescribed goals which the society defines as legitimate for its members; the second is the system of prescriptions pertaining to the acceptable

means of reaching for these goals.

Societies differ in three important ways concerning these goals and means. First, societies differ according to just what their goals and means actually are; for example, the goals for the United States differ from those of India. Second, societies vary in which of their goals and means are held as legitimate to which members of the society; for example, India has a differentiated set of goals--people of one caste seek goals which differ from those sought by members of other castes. And, third, societies vary in the amount of emphasis given to goals relative to that given to means. From all the variations possible along these dimensions, just one type of society is singled out for consideration: the extreme type which holds out the same goals and means to all its members regardless of their location in the social structure of that society. Depending upon whether or not the members of this type of society accept the prescribed goals and means, the following types of behavior are possible (Merton, 1957).

	Type of Behavior*	Goals	Means	Implication, Example
	I. Conformity	+	+	Stable, uniform society
Deviate from the prescribed modes of behavior	II. Innovation	+	-	Unacceptable means to attain goals, crime, demonstrations, etc.
	III. Ritualism	-	+	Abide by the rules, give proper appearance, bureaucrats.
	IV. Retreatism	-	-	Withdrawal from society, hippies, hobos.
	V Rebellion	∓	∓	Reject or change both goals and means, can be peaceful or violent.

*Key: +, accepts; -, rejects. (Merton, 1957)

To further set the stage for a discussion specifically on Mexican Americans, the following short description of the United States in terms of this scheme is necessary. The ideology of a society often expresses these cultural aspects of goals and means. The ideology of the United States is permeated with themes of individual struggle and consequent economic success which is held forth as a legitimate goal for all members. The themes go further than this, however; not only is economic success held as a legitimate goal for everyone, but individual worth tends to be defined in terms of this economic success, or at least in terms of continued striving for it. The seeking of economic success becomes not merely a legitimate goal, but in fact a moral obligation of the members of this society. The theme of individual success is so heavily stressed in the United States that by comparison the morally acceptable means for achieving success are slighted. This distortion produces a milieu in which there is no room for failure for many--a milieu in which many persons begin to abandon the prescribed means for achieving their success goals for whatever means possible (Merton, 1957).

Future Patterns of Behavior

Our research has confirmed that Mexican American youth (and others) from the most disadvantaged conditions possible in this nation are success oriented; they accept the goals of this society and are strongly committed to them. Whether these youth have historically held high mobility ambitions or have only recently acquired such ambitions, most can be described currently as being highly success oriented, particularly when one considers the origins of these youth (Wright, 1968). Failure

to be upwardly mobile in the future cannot be blamed upon any absolute lack of personal desire or personal commitment. And, there is indication that these youth additionally accept the societally prescribed means to their goals, as evidenced by their educational projections, education being a standard, effective, and widely condoned channel of mobility--that is, they indicate an acceptance of prescribed means, so far![3]

In terms of the above scheme of behavior, it would be tempting to say that historically and presently the behavior of Mexican Americans in general and in terms of the above goals-means scheme has been that of "Conformity." This statement, one could argue, can be supported in that the history of the Mexican American people in their behavior in response toward the rest of this society has been peaceful, non-aggressive. If they desire these goals as we indicate but still have not attained them as demographic data indicate, then it is simply because they have not tried hard enouth through the accepted means. It would be tempting to make such statements, but they would be grossly inaccurate. An accurate statement is that Mexican Americans similarly to other minorities have been denied access to the societally prescribed means, or having employed them still failed to achieve success due to prejudicial and discriminatory hiring, paying, and promoting practices (Grebler, et al., 1970; Blau and Duncan, 1967).

The question is posed again: What is going to happen if changes in the structures of opportunities do not occur, or don't come soon enough? What is likely to happen in the future when most of these youth begin to fail to achieve their highly desired goals (which are held to be legitimate and even expected of them) because the legitimate avenues for mobility

are blocked or ineffective?

To us, the major lines of activity have already been sketched. Most future activity of Mexican Americans in pursuing their goals can be expected to be "conformist" in orientation. That is, the majority of Mexican Americans can be expected to continue striving for those goals through the accepted means--or, perhaps more accurately, they will continue to attempt to gain access to those means and to make the means more effective. However, it appears warranted to predict a considerable and dramatic increase in forms of "innovative" behavior. Increasing effort is being given to discover and utilize new and different collective means for development rather than the traditional individual, quiet struggle. Maclovio Barraza, a Mexican American leader, speaking to the Cabinet Committee Hearings on Mexican American Affairs expressed this position boldly and succinctly when he said "Along with the other disadvantaged people, the Mexican American is growing more and more restless. He is patient, but it's running out. He may soon be forced to seek dramatic alternatives to his patience--alternatives that seem to bring more generous responses...than obedient restraint in face of adversity and injustice" (Rendon, 1970). These dramatic, innovative changes which Barraza calls for still remain to be brought into full play: sit-ins, demonstrations, and other forms of militant behavior; increased political activities ranging from more emphasis on voter registration and more informed and block voting to the formation of political organizations; perhaps some increase in certain forms of violent or illegal activities which would enable individuals to enjoy goals on an individual basis; certainly increased efforts to coalesce with other minorities, especially with Blacks.

Perhaps no less important than increases in innovative behavior will be the expected increases in forms of "rebellious" behavior, although the amount of these activities can be expected to be relatively small. It must be remembered that rebellion is defined here in terms of rejecting the goals and means of the society and substituting new ideals for these and that this behavior may be peaceful or not. Surely, such substitution is implied when Chicano activists state that many of their subcultural values must be preserved and incorporated in the value complexes of the larger society.

In short, heightened activism at all levels of participation and toward the issues concerning occupation, education, welfare, and discrimination would appear to be in store for the future. The deep commitment of the youth whom we have studied, if applicable to similar Mexican American youth as we believe it to be, indicates a sustaining force for more militancy and more activism, not less; perhaps this society has seen to date only the "advance guard of the movement" and "La Causa." The problems to be faced go beyond those encountered by the Mexican American individual or single family. There are problems which pertain to the Mexican American ethnic minority as a whole and which must be resolved for the minority as a group, presuming it can be organized and take on structure and identity. These difficulties are those relating to internal factionalization of the minority and consequent lack of unity and internal communication; this lack of unity is accompanied by lack of group awareness, lack of definitions of clear common purpose and consensus on methods, and--not the least of all--lack of power, both economic and political (Rendon, 1970). The needs with respect to these difficulties are self-

evident. In sum, we are predicting continued "conformity" behavior among Mexican Americans as the major pattern of behavior, but accompanied by a dramatic increase in "innovative" behavior and activism despite the problems of disunity outlined above. The specific nature and consequences of this activity and their relationship to the difficulties of disunity deserve careful consideration. The traditional rallying cry of an unorganized minority which feels that it has suffered inequities, states that "To accomplish meaningful results will require pressure, aggressiveness on the part of the minority itself and this will require greater unity. We cannot rely on someone else to champion our cause; we must do it ourselves. Thus, we must unite, organize, and remain active; this will take time, and delays and setbacks must be expected. But we shall overcome!" The implication of the call to unity and action is that by calling for greater unity it shortly will be forth-coming and the inequities will then begin to be resolved.

While there is little disputing that it would be to the overall advantage of Mexican Americans to achieve unity in pursuing their collective goals, this does not mean that they will or are likely to do so. The difficulties of achieving unity and organizing are substantial enough to support skepticism about the success of the movement--it may well fail. However, the attempt to unite will in all probability produce long-run opportunity gains for the minority.

On that note of dissention concerning the feasibility of a solid front, we turn to a further specification of alternative outcomes and predictions of their likelihoods. Of course, it is possible that Mexican Americans could largely return to the earlier states of somnolence

which existed before the recent developments of group identity and the movement simply die out, but such a course of events is highly unlikely. Another conceivable but very improbable alternative outcome is that Mexican Americans will achieve unity and consensus across all factions on goals and means, become quite aggressive as a group, and provoke a backlash or even instances of open warfare between themselves and the dominant society with no resultant improvement in their circumstances. This, too, however, appears unlikely because most people--Mexican American or otherwise--tend to be pragmatically oriented toward their individual comfort and hence rather reluctant to make the sacrifices necessary for such militant action, because of the already mentioned deep splits among Mexican American groups themselves, and lastly because the society is making adaptive changes itself toward the Mexican American minority.

A total picture of the most probable future of the Mexican American movement is a composite including all of the individual components mentioned. Factionalism of Mexican Americans will continue due to distinctive ethnic differences within the minority itself, due to differing interests, and due to inability to overcome such differences. At the same time that factionalism can be expected to continue--maybe even increase--there will be a heightening of efforts by these factions to bring about facilitation for achieving their own special interests. And, as stated before, the major portion of the Mexican American people will remain more-or-less seemingly apathetic to the movement, unwilling to make the individual sacrifices of time, resources, and comfort necessary to engage in a struggle, but, however, ready and willing to take advantage of the new opportunities to mobility as they are made available to them

by the partial successes of those groups actively engaged in the movement. The overall situation will be rather cyclical in nature, alternating between periods of sporadic events which provoke bursts of intense attention, and activity on the one hand and, on the other, periods of inactivity and listlessness. There will be successive periods marked by considerable unity over specific issues, unity which will then dissolve into periods marked by continued factionalism and drifting apart until the next issue. Gains in opportunities available to Mexican Americans will follow in a comparable manner; at times gains will come in a flood, at others in a trickle.

This total picture of the future course of events with respect to the activities of Mexican Americans is one reflecting the general patterns of minority group operations, and a most recent example of the pattern is the Black movement to date. One speculative point of difference between the overall patterns of the Black and the Mexican American movements is worthy of comment here. While it is plausible that the issues at the source of the Black movement will someday be resolved with some degree of finality, such is not the case with the Mexican American movement; there will continue to be an influx of immigrants from Mexico who will continually replenish the lower ranks of the Mexican American minority and thereby re-kindle the issues of the Mexican American movement (Burma, 1970b; Forbes, 1970). Such a substantial influx of Blacks so as to re-kindle their issues is not likely to occur.

It is apparent from the above that we have been orienting our discussion toward the probable long-range consequences. The overall, very long-run implication of the Mexican American movement appears to be

a striving for and an eventual achievement of assimilation into the broader United States society and not a situation of general and widespread ethnic and cultural separatism existing for the Mexican American majority.[4] Several Mexican American organizations are founded on explicitly formulated goals of assimilation: the latent implications of the stated goals of most Mexican American organizations suggest underlying goals of assimilation (Sheldon, 1970). Our own data affirm that the majority of Mexican American youth are oriented toward the "good things" of the broader society, that is, toward assimilation goals, rather than toward goals of separatism.

This is not say that there are no Mexican Americans who have separatism as a goal; indeed, there are--however, the point being stressed is that they are a minority. Further, of this minority holding the goal of separatism, the portion who are intensely committed to this goal and also willing to make sacrifices to attain it are even smaller. It is from this small minority, seriously committed to the goal of separatism, that the most radical and extreme forms of behavior can be expected; and, it bears repeating that this group is a very small minority. However, before efforts at separatism are disregarded, one should consider the broader consequences of such efforts. Some attempts at separatism are a standard mode of adaptive behavior among the usual responses of a minority and serve the useful--in fact, necessary--purposes of helping to gain attention for the minority and of acting as a point around which ethnic identification can take place. Beyond these broad services, the efforts of separists do at times result in demonstrable redress of grievances and the preservation of some subcultural values and ideals.[5]

The Short Run

The long-range result is eventual assimilation, but let's return to the more immediate situation of those persons who hold high level aspirations yet are unlikely to attain them. Beyond the modes of adaptive behavior which have been covered above, there are other, less visible adaptations that are likely to occur. As the youth we studied begin to be frustrated in their efforts to achieve their goals, they may simply lower the level of their goals, or lessen the intensity of their commitment to these goals, or both. A more probable outcome, and there is preliminary empirical research to indicate this, is that the youth will continue to maintain both their high level goals and their deep commitment to these goals, but lower their expectations of what they will actually achieve (Thomas and Jacob, 1970). Concomitant with this pattern of continued high aspirations but lowered expectations there will probably occur the well documented pattern of shifting the goals these youth will have failed to attain onto their future children, socializing their children in turn to have high goals and expectations (Douvan and Adelson, 1966; Shostak and Gomberg, 1964; Coles, 1964; Kohn, 1963).

We feel it necessary to direct some comments toward what all this may mean in terms of concrete events for the individual. For many of the individuals concerned, it appears that much personal frustration lies ahead. Their aspirations and expectations are simply higher than they will be able to attain--too high to be attained in general even where dramatic positive changes in opportunity occur in the structure of society. The tension generated by this frustration will have to be

addressed very directly by both the Mexican American ethnic minority and by the larger society, to attempt channeling this tension into productive uses in order to avoid a variety of social costs. But how?

One vital area for immediate ameliorative attention is the educational system. Youth have high educational goals and expectations, but are unlikely to attain even their expectations in the current system. The schools do not address the problems encountered by Mexican American youth, problems of language usage, lack of attention to Mexican American heritage, isolation of these youth and communities from the Anglo society, lack of encouragement and social support, and exclusion of the Mexican American community from the schools even within areas of high Mexican American concentration (United States Commission on Civil Rights, 1971a, 1971b, 1972). There are good reasons for focusing upon the school systems as a locus for change: the short comings and deficiencies of the school systems are well documented; Mexican Americans have the highest rate of drop-outs and of failure to complete school of any group, and consequently the lowest levels of school attainment; Mexican American youth have high educational goals; and, as stated earlier, a higher education has been and remains one of the surest channels (though not without problems) for upward mobility in this country. One thing that is not needed in relation to education is a program aimed at generally "instilling high aspirations" or at "raising the level of the aspirations" of these youth; their aspirations are already high. Programs of social change which will facilitate achieving their aspirations in some degree are what is needed. And, such programs as these latter mean at the very least aid to families and communities in addition to substantial school reforms.

Some youth with low level or seriously incongruent aspirations for mobility, but with high levels of talent and capability, may be helped by simply encouraging them to aim higher, but only if guidance and support is provided to locate and realize opportunities that exist. What about the youth with high achievement aspirations, but low capabilities--undoubtedly the more common type: how is he to be dealt with best in his own and the larger society's best interests?

CONCLUSIONS

Beyond individual, familial, and governmental efforts and resources that should be used to help the Mexican American minority achieve parity in our society, another avenue of resources are formal voluntary organizations. These can perform many diverse services such as dissemination of information as well as interpretation of events, the pursuing of benefits or advantages through public pressure, the safeguarding of the interests of the group, and diffuse social support for members (Blau and Scott, 1962; Lipset, 1960). A well-known example of such organizations serving the particular interests of an ethnic group is the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Use of the NAACP as an example here serves a dual purpose: not only does the NAACP attempt to protect the interests of Blacks, it is also well-known nationally and is looked to by Blacks and others as well as a central, unifying force and spokesman on a wide range of issues concerning Blacks. By comparison, no such broad-based, multifunctional organization exists to represent the Mexican American people as a whole (Sheldon, 1970). In summary, by comparison with Anglos, Mexican Americans tend to be isolated

from the broad mainstream of this society and the avenues to mobility in that society; by comparison with Blacks, Mexican Americans lack recognized, effective organizations to coordinate, to inform, and to aid them in seeking their goals.

The Mexican Americans are a diverse people, with many differences in values, interests, styles of life, and so on. Factionalism occurs in reference to finer ethnic distinctions (Spanish Americans, combinations with American Indians, native citizens of the United States, Puerto Ricans, and others), location in the class structure, age, occupational interests, and in some cases, length of residence in this country. To date and to the best of our knowledge, there has not yet emerged a central, unifying Mexican American organization. Although La Raza Unida party and the United Farm Workers Union (UFWU) have, at times, come close to serving as a central, organizing focus, they tend to perform narrow singular functions and rather narrow economic and political interests.

The partial effectiveness of UFWU in achieving recognition and higher wages, in California and Florida, and incidences of effectiveness by La Raza Unida (Crystal City, Texas, for example) have gained considerable publicity for Mexican Americans and have encouraged the formation of many other groups that are explicitly organized for the purpose of advancing the interests of Mexican Americans along many different fronts. Such effectiveness has also resulted in statements, formally or informally, from already established organizations to the effect they wish to help. The ability to accomplish significant results, by either the new organizations or the established sympathizers, remains to be measured. We know little as sociologists about how Mexican American youth view these

organizations in relation to their social goals, or whether or not (or which organizations) they are likely to support or join.

A similar position can be developed on leadership among Mexican Americans (Rivera, 1970). Compared to charismatic leaders such as the late Martin Luther King, Congressman Julian Bond, Mayor Charles Evers, and others among the Blacks, Mexican Americans have fewer, clearly visible and accepted leaders who maintain allegiance across the many Mexican American factions. Some such examples are perhaps Cesar Chavez and Reyes Tijerina--although it is debatable as to whether or not the methods employed by these two men--maybe even their goals!--are accepted by all or even most factions. To what extent are these actual leaders becoming symbols of a larger and broader movement and symbols (hero figures) for Mexican American youth?

Finally, in considering impediments faced by Mexican American youth as they pursue their achievement goals, the problem of a language handicap should be given priority, although it is an often heard topic (Kuvlesky and Patella, 1971).

And, despite linguists' claim that a language handicap is a problem shared by Blacks, other ethnic groups, and lower class youth in general, as well as by Mexican American youth, there is little disagreement that this problem as encountered by Mexican Americans is the most severe (Peñalosa, 1967). There is little likelihood that Mexican American youth in substantial number can advance through a college education until the language problems can be overcome. And, there is equally little doubt that these language difficulties will not be overcome if the educational systems continue to fight and resist bilingual programs as they have done

and may still be doing now--even given the fact that there are a number of promising programs involving bilingual education for American Indians and Mexican Americans which exist through stimulation by federal encouragement and funding. In general, it is doubtful--at least propositional--whether the school functionaries at the local level have dramatically altered their long standing, negative orientations about the use of a "foreign" language in their schools. What may appear to be a significant trend toward bilingual programs in terms of funding being utilized, may be a deceiving surface effect--little may have changed in most local schools in this regard.

It would be interesting to see to what extent Spanish is actually used in general in formal school relations within predominantly Mexican American areas. Of course, the issue is broader than a willingness to tolerate use of Spanish in school; it is really the extent to which the school staff can relate meaningfully to the students--their needs, interests, backgrounds. Outside of Crystal City, it is probable that Mexican American youth are still predominantly taught by Anglo teachers and that the proportional increase in use of Mexican American teachers in these situations has been relatively small over the last five years. Is it any wonder that the Mexican American dropout rate is so high and that, according to our research, Mexican American youth feel they were not encouraged to stay in school (Wages, et al., 1969)? The surprising thing is how hope persists as it does in these circumstances--the Mexican American dropouts we studied generally wanted to finish high school and many wanted to go farther. Most of them still hoped for social mobility through occupational attainment. It is likely that their hopes shall die in the future.

Concluding Remarks

The implications could be carried further; this is left to the reader and to those interested in extending research in this area of concern. By way of a summary conclusion, it should be noted that data were presented which portray Mexican American youth as generally being success-oriented and deeply committed to their goals; such a portrayal is a direct counter to the many negative stereotypes of these youth. Furthermore, awareness of this intensity of commitment provides a basis for predicting a sustaining force for the "movement" and for seeking "innovative" forms of behavior in pursuing individual and collective minority group goals, Finally, it was indicated that the educational system was a logical and much needed area for immediate ameliorative reform. Our data argue strongly against general programs, which are insensitive to differences in individual desires, capabilities, and needs, against present and continued unrestricted use of vocational education programs, and also against programs aimed at raising aspirations.

Table 1. Selected Indicators of Socioeconomic Conditions in the South Texas and East Central Texas Study Areas Compared with Texas and the United States

Place	Total Population (thousands)	Anglo (%)	Mexican Americans (%)	Low-Income Families[a] (%)	Median Family Income	Median School Years Comp.[b]
South Texas						
Dimmit	10	c	67	60	$2,480	5
Maverick	15	c	78	58	2,523	6
Starr	17	c	89	71	1,700	5
Zapata	4	c	75	66	1,766	5
East Texas						
Burleson	11	62	d	59	2,451	8
Leon	10	61	d	67	1,946	9
San Jacinto	6	47	d	69	1,737	7
Texas	9,580	73	14	29	4,884	10
United States	179,323	87	2	21	5,657	11

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, U.S. Census of Population: 1960, Volume 1, Characteristics of the Population, Part 1, United States Summary and Part 45, Texas (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1964) and U.S. Bureau of the Census, U.S. Census of Population: 1960, Subject Reports, Persons of Spanish Surname, Final Report Pc(2)-1B.

[a]Annual family incomes below $3,000

[b]By persons 25 years old and over.

[c]Almost all individuals not classified as Mexican American would be classified Anglo.

[d]Percentage of Mexican American is less than one-tenth of 1%. Most individuals not classified as Anglo would be classified as Negro.

Table 2. Summary Table of Ethnic Comparisons on Elements of Occupational and Educational Status Projections.*

Status projection elements	Ethnic comparisons described			
	Males		Females	
	Results	Direction of differences	Results	Direction of differences
Aspiration levels				
Occupation	Similar	———	Similar	———
Education	Similar	———	Similar	———
Expectation levels				
Occupation	Similar	———	Different	N>MA,A
Education	Different	N>A>MA	Different	N>A>MA
Anticipatory deflection				
Occupation	Similar	———	Similar	———
Education	Similar	———	Similar	———
Intensity of aspiration				
Occupation	Different	MA>A>N	Different	MA>N,A
Education	Similar	———	Similar	———
Certainty of expectation				
Occupation	Similar	———	Different	A,N,>MA
Education	Similar	———	Similar	———

*Letter symbols identify ethnic groups. MA=Mexican American; N=Negro; A=Anglo.

Table 3. Summary Comparison of Proportions of Three Ethnic Groups Having "High" and "Low" Goals

	Males (%)			Females (%)		
	MA	Anglo	Negro	MA	Anglo	Negro
High Goals						
Occupation	54	51	49	60	53	60
Education	53	59	64	51	38	48
Low Goals						
Occupation	9	8	25	3	2	4
Education	19	14	6	21	7	3

Table 4. Summary Comparison of Proportions of Three Ethnic Groups Having "High" and "Low" Expectations

	Males (%)			Females (%)		
	MA	Anglo	Negro	MA	Anglo	Negro
High Expectations						
Occupation	40	38	47	36	36	49
Education	39	43	63	37	39	46
Low Expectations						
Occupation	13	15	29	14	30	9
Education	31	19	7	32	13	9

Table 5. Summary Comparison of Proportions of Three Ethnic Groups Experiencing Anticipatory Deflection from Occupational and Educational Goals

Nature of Deflection from Goal	Males (%)			Females (%)		
	MA	Anglo	Negro	MA	Anglo	Negro
Positive						
Occupational	9	8	14	6	4	7
Educational	9	4	11	5	1	17
Negative						
Occupational	29	21	19	32	37	20
Educational	31	23	24	32	22	25
Total Deflected						
Occupational	38	29	33	38	41	27
Educational	40	27	35	37	23	42

Table 6. Summary Comparison of Proportions of Three Ethnic Groups Having High Intensity Aspirations and Indicating Certainty About Expectations

	Males (%)			Females (%)		
	MA	Anglo	Negro	MA	Anglo	Negro
Strong Aspirations						
Occupation	69	56	34	72	45	46
Education	85	69	80	89	81	79
Certain Expectations						
Occupational	36	48	44	32	52	56
Education	49	62	64	50	63	67

FOOTNOTES

1. The terms "deprived" and "disadvantaged" are employed in this paper in an economic sense, referring primarily to low family and per capita income, and not in the mistaken and extremely value laden sense of being "culturally deprived or disadvantaged."

2. The findings reported here are pertinent to comments by Burma (1970a, 1970b) and Nava (1970) in which they attempt to explicate the subcultural variation which is present within the Mexican American minority itself. Both believe that in speaking of value orientations of Mexican Americans, an effort should be made to differentiate the minority in terms of how closely the segments of the minority approximate or diverge from the characteristics and qualities of Mexico and its culture; those segments most like Mexico will have value orientations different from those segments more like the Anglo oriented society of the United States. Both men go on to state that those segments of the Mexican American minority which will have value orientations most like the traditional Mexican culture are those living in rural areas along the Mexican border where Mexican Americans are heavily concentrated and in which there is a heavy influence of agriculturally related employment. The counties from which our Mexican American respondents were selected fit all four criteria--rural, proximity to Mexico, predominantly Mexican American, and agriculturally dependent. Yet, we find the youth from these counties to be highly success oriented--not at all what Burma and Nava suggested.

3. Arciniega (1971) has utilized this scheme by Merton in a sensitive effort to locate, describe and explain the behavior patterns of various segments of the Mexican American population. Arciniega's interest is different from our own in that he attempts utilizing the entire scheme and describes historical and current conditions; we are more concerned with only a portion of the scheme and attempt to project future trends. Arciniega concludes his article with a description of the various modes of orientation toward school taken by Mexican American youth. In short, this brief article is "must" reading from both a theoretical and a pragmatic perspective.

4. The term "assimilation" is used here in the sense of more equal access to the avenues of mobility and less discriminatory practises against the ethnic minority--greater "social justice"--and not in the sense of stripping minorities of their ethnic identity.

5. Arciniega has critiqued this presentation (at the workshop where it was presented) most perceptively on the following grounds: in making our projections of future trends, we have held the goals segment of the goals-means scheme constant and looked only at how Mexican Americans might adapt themselves in striving for these goals. Arciniega states that the goals portion itself is also changing due to direct attempts to redefine the goals and also indirectly as a consequence of minorities utilizing

"deviant" modes of behavior to attain their goals. His analysis is correct; our only response to Arciniega is that we attempted to discern what the major, overall pattern of events would be. There should be little doubt that the goals of this society are being redefined, or at least being given greater specification. We did not feel ourselves competent to investigate these aspects at this time. Further, it may be that the goals of the society are more stable--less subject to change over time--than the means to attaining the goals. Nevertheless, Arciniega is correct and his suggestions are particularly worthy of research.

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